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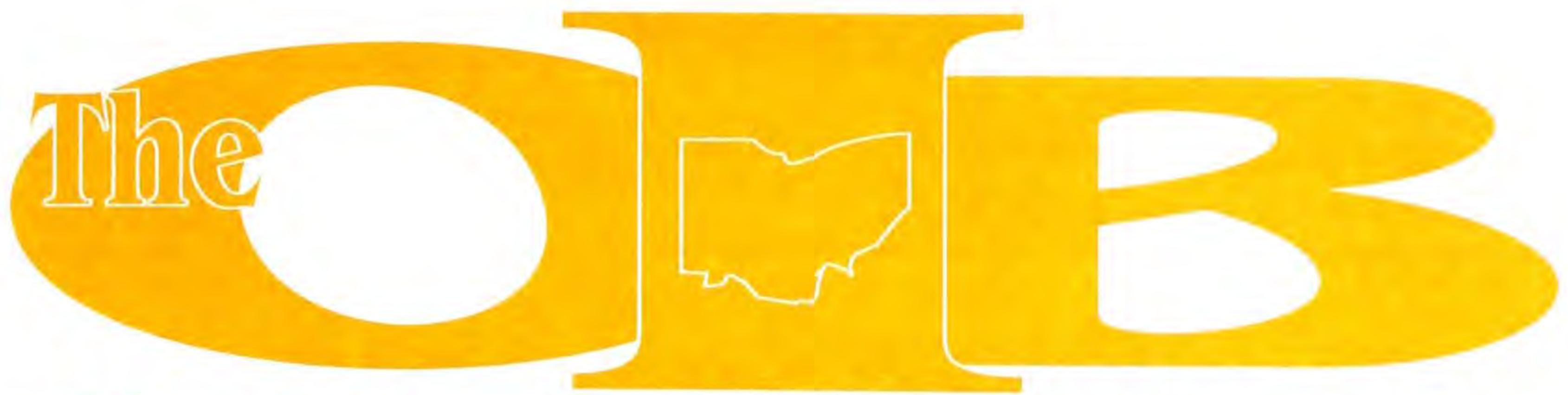
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The Ohio Independent Baptist

The Newsletter of the Ohio Association of Regular Baptist Churches

Vol. 72 No. 5

October 1999

We are devoting this issue of the OIB to outreach on the home front. The articles present a variety of methods we can use to make an impact on our communities. We can "stimulate one another to love and good works" when we know what others are doing. So, read...enjoy...learn...then do!

Toward Impacting our Community: the Journal of our Progress

by Mikal Kildal

Micah 6:8 *"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God."*

Long before the GARBC initiated its IMPACT 2000 campaign, the leadership of Washington Heights Baptist in Dayton had begun to lay a foundation for developing ministries that would mobilize and equip its members to impact the communities in which they live.

For many years WHBC has used special events as an effective outreach tool. Our women traditionally use Christmas home tours as a point of impact for their neighbors. The annual Super Bowl Outreach is very effective in communicating the gospel. This past spring and summer we participated in the distribution and follow-up of the Jesus video to **every** home in the greater Dayton area.

But were we really impacting our community?

In November 1998, we organized a special series of small-group meetings

to discuss how to make a difference in the community in which God has placed us. One discussion asked why we should consider helping others outside our church, i.e. the lost, the poor, single parents, etc. Field trips were scheduled to area ministry locations such as the women's center, the city mission, and a community center. During the next few months a team of individuals met to produce a strategic plan. Members of the church were polled to determine who among us was already involved in a community-based ministry and identify others open to such an outreach.

From the beginning our goal has been to produce teams of individuals who would work together on a specific long-term project or ministry. Under the direction of the staff and church leadership these groups would be equipped in evangelism, service, and team-building skills. Each team would then function as a unit, serving its specific ministry objectives.

Today we are ready to take the first steps of impacting our community. Our initial targets include: 1) single moms and children in a near-by subsidized housing project; 2) a crisis

pregnancy center and 3) international students at a local state university.

It is our expressed desire to bring the name and love of Christ to our neighbors that they might find the way to a personal relationship with Him. We will share the journal of our progress in the months ahead.

--Mikal Kildal is pastor of adult ministries at Washington Heights Baptist Church in Dayton, Ohio.

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Use pencil, email or phone but get
your news to us by
November 15
for the December OIB!
Please note the new email address:
dandlthomas@glasscity.net



The 1999-2000
OWMU project video
is available by contacting
Sue Miller at
614-875-4128

From Our Heart To Yours



Dave and Pat
Warren

Y2K i.e., "Y to Kare"

The time is drawing closer—the beginning of the new millenium. What will it be like? How many of the "disaster" stories will occur around the globe? What should Christians be doing? One thing for sure—Y2K is a *time to prepare, not to scare!*

How should we prepare? First of all, we should say that thoughtful preparation cannot be a bad thing. However, any preparation ought to be apart from fear. Christians, people who have truly accepted God's gift of salvation and Jesus Christ's work on the cross for them, are people of faith. They believe God's Word about themselves—they know they are sinners unable to merit eternal life on their own. They believe God's Word about Jesus, that He is the eternal Son of God Who gave Himself as their substitute for the death penalty they deserved. They believe God's Promise that anyone who receives Jesus also receives eternal life.

Therefore, Christians ought to be people of faith, rather than people of fear. Christians can approach 2000 with confidence that their sovereign God has the events of January 1 fully under His control. Our conversations should

evidence this faith, rather than fear. What we say to those who do not know our Savior ought to point people to our all-knowing God. This is a perfect time to offer people a "reason for the hope that lies within us." Where there is fear, let us point people to the source of hope. Whatever disasters abound here, our God is still on the throne.

A timely tool for witness may be as simple as a gospel tract. The American Tract Society has published one, entitled "Y2K." Beyond this, concerns about Y2K may provide an opportunity for a church to spread the Word in their community, along with an offer of help, should an emergency arrive in that area. Fuel, food, first aid—what else might be needed in case of an emergency? If you can't reach the entire community, target those who could be especially vulnerable, such as the elderly, or families with young children. Spread the Word of Hope and help; evidence faith not fear.

But if there is an emergency in your community, someone needs to be ready. Though there is no need to scare, there is sufficient reason to prepare. Churches and individuals can work together to be ready to meet needs as they develop. Even if no emergency arises, you and your church have already expressed your concern for their needs. They know that you will care whenever a need may arise in their family.

But just how does one prepare? One church offers several helpful suggestions.

1) Collect copies of important documents, in case you need to prove facts about identity and history: family birth certificates, marriage licenses, social security cards, deeds, titles, proofs of ownership, mortgage or loan agreements, bank statements, tax return, records of personal earnings and benefit statement from the Social Security Administration.

2) Have safe drinking water on hand, extra water in tubs or barrels for baths or toilet flushing. You may want to purchase bottled water, and you can save 2-liter soda bottles for refilling with water for short-term use.

3) Extra food and supplies in the pantry—home and church pantry. Don't forget a good can opener! Charcoal for a winter picnic might be appropriate. [Don't use indoors.] Non-powered tools could come in handy, such as duct-tape, rope, wire, nails, cardboard, etc.

4) Some extra cash for a minimum of two weeks. But please don't wait until December and make a run on the bank. If possible, pay a few bills in advance.

5) Have warm clothes available: long underwear, heavy socks and mittens, perhaps even a warm sleeping bag.

6) A good first-aid kit would be helpful, plus refills of any prescription drugs.

7) Candles or oil lamps can provide light and firewood or kerosene heaters for heat. This could be a good time to gather your neighbors or family together, since body heat can be quite effective in an enclosed room.

8) Communication is important in times of need. A battery-operated radio with plenty of batteries could be helpful. Plan how others could communicate their needs to you.

This same church group suggests that neighbors communicate, pool their efforts, their areas of expertise, as well as alert themselves to areas and persons of need. A group effort always brings people together. A church effort could bring church people together.

Think! How could you prepare to help your community without raising fear? That is the goal. Remember, you are preparing for outreach to others, not because you are afraid. You want to prepare, not scare.

And should there be no emergencies in your community, you will have offered hope to a people who always need it, and you have communicated concern for people's concerns. Perhaps God would use us for "such a time as this."

How To Reach Your State Rep

Write:

98 Kyle Drive
Cedarville OH
45314

Call:

937-766-5913

e-mail

WarrenOARBC@juno.com

On September 22, Mrs. Helen Drullinger went to be with her Savior. Helen was the wife of Dr. David Drullinger, associate professor of Bible at Cedarville College and preaching associate at Washington Heights Baptist in Dayton.



See you at the **OARBC Conference** in Portsmouth October 25-26. Remember, attire is "dressy casual."

Hannah's Home Becoming Reality

by Pastor Doug Reeder

The Bible contains many promises from God. One of those promises is, "With God all things are possible." This promise could not be any more straightforward. God oftentimes wants His children to watch Him do the unexpected.

Carol Beresford of Eastlake, Ohio, has watched God do what was believed to be the impossible. Carol is the wife of Rev. Paul Beresford, pastor of Calvary Fellowship Baptist Church in Painesville, about 40 miles east of Cleveland.

For several years Carol searched for the answer to the question of how Christians could best impact the social issue of abortion which plagues America. God's answer to Carol was to establish a home for unwed mothers.

The answer involved money—lots of it—bricks, mortar, and a location. Mrs. Beresford committed this vision to prayer, personally and collectively, as she shared her burden with the church. She prayed about it for 13 years and then discussed her vision with a Cleveland area doctor who challenged her to make her vision a reality. Thus Hannah's Home was born in Mrs. Beresford's heart.

The hard part came next: putting her hands and feet to her faith. She knew she needed a board of directors and people skilled in counseling and medicine. With the board in place, Hannah's Home needed a location to call home. Mrs. Beresford, known for her persistence and not taking "no" for an answer, approached a Mentor businessman, Jerome T. Osborne. Osborne donated a five-acre site in Mentor to the project. She also approached a contractor from her church, Dave Barr, to oversee construction of the building as God worked His miracle.

Next came approval for the plans by Mentor City Council, which came with few problems. And with God's help, donated materials literally poured into Hannah's Home.

Carol received a crash course in raising money when the board decided it needed \$200,000 in the bank to pay for

construction items not donated. She organized several fund-raisers, including an auction, Mother's Day gift-wrapping at a local mall, a rib cook-off, and a golf outing. She has been diligent in requesting help from groups, and several large donations have come into Hannah's Home unsolicited.

Even though initial fund-raising goals have been met, the need continues. Once the home is built and opened, there are monthly obligations. Hannah's Home is separate from Calvary Fellowship, so it must be a self-sustaining ministry.

If you would like to know more about Hannah's Home, contact Pastor Doug Reeder at 440-354-8994.

Growing In Grace

--This article is the fourth in a series on discipleship written by members of the Council of 12.

Recently I inquired concerning the well-being of the pastor that I grew up under. "Praising the Lord," was the reply. When I was a teenager, the Lord brought to the Evansville Baptist Church a man who was willing to invest his life in mine. His name was Donald Loomis.

While Don influenced my life for godliness, there were also deacons in that church who contributed greatly in the making of my young life. Jesse Robertson saw the potential for my becoming a preacher of the gospel. God used Harvey McCormick, Cliff Wiggins, and Warren Lawrence to provide transportation to the services and activities of the church—a seemingly insignificant ministry that helped me catch a vision of serving the Lord.

Many are serving the Lord today because of those faithful pastors and deacons who were there to help young people like me "Grow in Grace."

*--Pastor William L. Davis
Bible Baptist Church, Bedford*

Project Needs Volunteers

ABWE's new Missionary Training Center is already underway at the Administrative office in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Under the leadership of Bob Dyer, this addition will house ABWE's new program to provide basic, practical field training for pre-field missionaries and continuing education for veteran missionaries. Though much of the training will be done on the field, the new facilities are designed to accommodate the Harrisburg portions of this program.

Volunteers are needed to help with construction. Skills particularly critical include bricklayers, HVAC, plumbing and electrical and carpet installers. There is also a great need for framing and finish carpentry, roofers, drywall installers, drop ceiling installers, painters, cooks, kitchen helpers and all sorts of general laborers.

Anyone interested in helping with this project may contact Cloe Mitchell at ABWE (Phone: 717-774-4400, ext. 387; email: chloe@abwe.org). ABWE is looking for 40 volunteers per week. Those who desire to participate by supplying materials should contact Dick Mitchell at 717-774-4400, ext. 402.



Memo to Church Secretaries & Treasurers:

Just a reminder that all contributions to the OARBC General Fund & the OIB should be sent to the OARBC bookkeeper:

OARBC
c/o Mr. Phil Miller
1750 Flinthill
Columbus OH 43223

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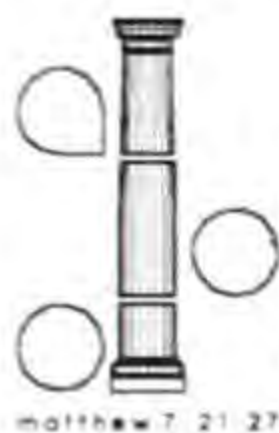
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Celebrate
Ohio

This month we hope you will come to Portsmouth and "Celebrate the Wall." The Portsmouth flood wall features the largest continuous work of art in the United States by a single artist. It's a "can't miss" on your trip to the annual conference. Artist Robert Daffler has depicted highpoints of Portsmouth history in beautiful large murals.

Featured are hometown heroes such as Roy Rogers and Branch Rickey, the former major league Baseball Commissioner who signed Jackie Robinson. And did you know that the Detroit Lions got their NFL start in Portsmouth as the Spartans? Or that the first night NFL football game was played in Portsmouth?

Pastor Gowdy of Temple Baptist is most proud of the mural featuring the original Portsmouth Motorcycle Club, the first in the state of Ohio, because his grandfather's brother, Spencer Gowdy, and his wife, Edith, are in the "line-up" of riders on the wall.

As the first Baptist church in Portsmouth, Pastor Gowdy and Temple have also been contacted to have a part in a new mural being designed to depict the spiritual life of the area. The committee which decides what will be painted will likely feature their original building, which burned to the ground in 1925. Perhaps you will see this painting in progress during the conference.

Before you leave, be sure to check out the other side of the Wall, facing the river. There you will see the "Stars," signed by local celebrities. One of these "stars" is Temple Baptist's own secretary, Elizabeth Bell, the 1986 Mrs. Ohio.

You just might have to spend an extra morning in Portsmouth after all!!

PUSH!

To your email address book
& change the OIB address to
dandlthomas@glasscity.net!

Please send all your OIB
communications to this
address. Thanks!

(The Warrens' address has
not changed. It is still
warrenoarbc@juno.com).

Cedarville College News

Cedarville began its 1999-2000 year of instruction on September 23 with approximately 2,750 students enrolled. Upon arrival, students found numerous changes to the campus, including a newly-opened dorm complex and conference center, new athletic fields, continuing construction on the Student Life Center, a resurfaced gym floor in the Athletic Center, and a new parking lot where the beloved Bethel Hall had stood for 51 years.

A team of six Cedarville College engineering students recently earned the grand prize of \$6,000 in the sixth annual International Padnos Design Competition, which recognizes innovative and environmentally-responsible student engineering projects. The Cedarville group, all of whom have since graduated, travelled to the American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME) Design Engineering Technical Conference in Las Vegas September 12-15 to receive their prize money and an invitation to publish their research report in the Technology Journal of Franklin Institute.

The team won the grand prize by designing and building a portable machine that efficiently removes rod guides from oil well sucker rods so that the sucker rods can be reused. Their project benefits the oil industry by decreasing supply costs, increasing profit from old oil wells, and reducing environmental waste.

Chuck Allport, assistant to the academic vice president and associate professor of mechanical engineering at Cedarville College, was recently honored as Outstanding Faculty Advisor in the 1999 Ethanol Vehicle Challenge (EVC) program.

The \$10,000 award was inaugurated this year by The Governors' Ethanol Coalition to recognize faculty leadership and "impact on students" at the participating EVC colleges. \$1,000 goes to the individual and \$9,000 to enhance their program. The Ethanol Vehicle Challenge is an Advanced Technology Vehicle engineering competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy, Natural Resources Canada and General Motors Corporation.

Allport has been advisor to Cedarville alternative fuel teams for the past six years and has advised more than 30 various intercollegiate competition teams in his 10 years at Cedarville College.

Ohio Women

Dear Ladies,

Since we are midway through our SOWMU year, I want to give you an update on the Simbai project in New Guinea. The following excerpts from a recent letter from Bill and Debbie Tobias should do that best. Their letter should also encourage you to pray more fervently and fill even more quarter savers. Remember, we need to fill 2,000 in order to purchase the needed Kawasaki Mule.

"Dear Folks,

Greetings from the Simbai. The Simbai Project continues to move along, although somewhat slower than we had hoped or imagined. We know the Lord is in control and we are following His schedule.

We have done some more repairs to our government house. The shower has been completely renovated. New lights and outlets have been installed throughout the house, eliminating the need for extension cords. A used electric water pump has been installed so we no longer need to pump our water by hand. We still have a few things to do, like plumb the hot water into the kitchen sink. We do not have a bathroom sink, but we'll get that later when we add a small room to the back of the house. Our roof has been another matter. We have fixed several leaks, but our temporary repairs haven't been too successful. Meanwhile, we move the furniture and set out the buckets accordingly when it rains!

The formerly impassable 42-mile road from Aiome to Simbai is now open, at least to motorbikes and four or six wheel drive vehicles.

All our cargo is being stored in Madang awaiting shipment via barge up the Ramu River to Aiome. Dry season began in June, and the river level is too low to make the shipment, so we will

probably not be able to ship our cargo until November. As a result, our building teams have had to be rescheduled.

Meanwhile, we will continue to work with our national pastors and their churches here in the Simbai. Perhaps this "delay" will give us a chance to get the new church started here in the Simbai Station. The Lord knows. He will work out all the details according to His will.

Thanks for all your faithful prayers and financial support."

"For Such A Time As This...Reaching Forth" encompasses Bill and Debbie Tobias there in New Guinea, and we OWMU women here in Ohio, so that thousands in the Simbai region will hear the gospel, many for the first time. What an awesome thought!

In His Love
Sue Miller



Fall Rally Canton Area WMF

October 19
10 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.
First Baptist Church
Louisville, Ohio

Speakers: Tom and Kari Zentz,
ABWE church planters in Japan

OWMU Fall Rally

Tuesday, October 26
2:00 p.m.
Temple Baptist Church
1148 Gallia Street, Portsmouth

Speaker: Mrs. Juleen Hayes
BMM, Ghana

Theme: "For Such A Time As This...
Reaching Forth"

Project: \$10,000 for a
Kawasaki Mule for missionary
Debbie Tobias in Papua New Guinea

Come prepared to help us
reach our goal!



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1750 Flinthill Drive
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614-875-4128

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Huntsburg OH 44046-0247
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1911 Eldridge Avenue
Akron OH 44301
330-724-9676

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8859 State Rt. #47 West
DeGraff OH 43318
937-585-6255

As You Go...

Witnessing on the Appalachian Trail! A member of one of our northeast Ohio churches, hiking the trail last month, had unique opportunities to share the Gospel almost every day. He witnessed to a hiker doing volunteer maintenance work on a shelter and left a tract with him. Later in the day their paths crossed again at another shelter along the trail. He hesitated about again talking to the worker but the urging of the Spirit of God was clear. When asked if he'd had time to read the tract, the man was eager to talk. While they walked to the truck for some equipment, the shelter worker asked "Can you tell me how to find God?" Moments later, there in the forest he trusted Christ!

As you go, even in the wilderness, "be ready always to give an answer."

--edited by David Chapman

National Association of Nouthetic Counselors

Track 1 Coming to Cleveland Area

October 22,23 November 19,20
December 3,4

Grace Baptist Church
23096 Center Ridge Rd
Westlake, OH 44145
1-440-333-4515
FAX 1-440-333-4859
Email Dunngbc@aol.com

Basic counseling issues with focus on marital, parent-child and frequent life problems. Track offers 30 hours of instruction. Call to preregister.

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Camp Patmos

This year seven youth weeks and three family camps attracted 2045 campers to Patmos. This represented a 20% increase over last year. There were 110 recorded professions of faith and many other decisions of rededication and assurance. God met with us in a wonderful way! To God be the glory.

In 1999 God allowed us to erect a recreation building that houses a craft room, restrooms, handicap accessible showers, and room for carpet ball, foosball, bumper pool, Ping-Pong and other indoor activities.

This year we held an "Especially For Homeschoolers" family camp in late August. It was a great success, and we are planning another for next summer. The speakers will be Dr. John and Mrs. Whitcomb. Register early for that week if you want to reserve a cabin.

Skyview Ranch

7241 T.R. 319
Millersburg, OH 44654
330-674-7511 FAX 330-674-4606
E-mail svranch@valkyrie.net

What a great time to be at the Ranch! It is such a lift to hear crunching with each footstep. The fall colors are peeking out here and there on some of the trees. Those few patches of color promise more beautiful changes to come as we march though the fall season of ministry. The property alone is an amazing ministry asset.

We all encounter the daily grind as we tread through the hustle and bustle of our lives. A time-out at Skyview Ranch is an opportunity to escape the rat-race. The camp is nestled in the rolling hills of Holmes County. The picturesque property and serenity themselves are like an eloquent sermon that cuts to the heart and challenges the "hearers" to stop and consider their Creator.

This setting is an amazing backdrop

for the ministries that are ahead. Most of the groups that will be at the Ranch this fall will be adults. The potential for outreach and refreshment is greatest to those who most need time away. We are excited for the opportunity to serve and present the Word of God boldly throughout the retreat season.

The lake site has also changed a great deal. The trees are down and most of the brush has been removed. We should begin filling the lake in October. It is exciting to watch the progress and anticipate the beautiful addition the lake will be. We invite you to come see the changes at the Ranch and take advantage of the opportunity to get away.

Please be in prayer for the ministry this fall season.

Fall Retreats

Senior Citizens Days

October 5, 7, 12, & 14

Marriage Enrichment Retreat

November 12-13

Scioto Hills

1009 Martin Rd.
Wheelersburg, OH 45694-8462
740-778-3279 FAX 740-778-2170
E-mail grow@sciotohills.com
Web site www.sciotohills.com

A Place to Grow!! Growth always causes change, but change does not always produce growth. At Scioto, we have been excited about the continued growth God has given us in our summer camping ministry program. Over the past 35 years, Scioto has developed a program that God has used to bring campers to Himself. However, in the coming year we will be changing our schedule to produce a more effective camp. Beginning next summer, Scioto Hills will be offering eight Junior (Frontier) Camps, four Junior High (Alpha) Camps as well as Senior (Super) High Camp, and our new Outback Programs which will offer Mountain Bike and Cross Country Camps. Though many camps will be offered the same week, each camp will be operated separately from the other concurrent camps.

The goal of Scioto Hills is to develop our guests spiritually, mentally, socially, and physically in

accordance to the Word of God. We feel to have more effective ministry, we must reduce the number of campers in each program per week for smaller groups as well as ensure that our camps are even more accurately age-graded. To accomplish this, we will offer additional camps and set number limits to guarantee small, personal groups. Our goal in the succession of camps from Frontier to Alpha to Super High is to keep campers over the years, in order to foster a discipling relationship. We are not simply interested in individual camps for specific age levels, but our goal is to help develop individuals,

through an effective camping ministry, to impact the world for Christ. Be on the lookout for the 2000 brochures coming soon.

Upcoming Events:

Couples #2-October 1-2

speaker: Pastor Tom Wright

concert: Bob Beikart

Couples #3-October 8-9

speaker: Pastor Tim Kenoyer

concert: Jay LaBlanc

Dinner Concert-December 4

concert: Graceway Quartet

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Pennsylvania Pete as "Ark-ologist" AKA "Mr. Dan"

Vienna

Pastor Arch McCune of **Vienna Baptist** writes, "We would like to thank Faith Baptist of Bolivar and Pastor Floyd Stanfill for heading up our VBS this year. They conducted their own 'Noah's World' presentation, and it was excellent. Each one that came and helped was excited about serving our Lord, and this was evident in the quality of the program. Although we did not have a lot of children, the ones we did reach as well as our own church family were edified and challenged."

Cedarville

Twenty teenagers and three adult sponsors from **Grace Baptist Church** in Cedarville recently completed a two-week missions trip to the Philippines, on the island of Luzon. The group was hosted by Gary and Becky Kuhn, a missionary family the church supports.

The Grace Youth Ministries team conducted basketball games plus drama, and puppet presentations in churches, public schools, colleges, and even a women's prison. They also painted the interior of one church and the exterior of another. The GYM team had many opportunities to share the gospel with individual Filipinos.

It was an incredible experience for the entire team, remarked Jeff Sanders, associate pastor at Grace. "We went with the goal to spread the gospel and to minister to the Filipino believers there. We accomplished that, but many times we found them to be a greater encouragement to us."

David Graham is senior pastor at Grace.

Kenton

Faith Baptist has extended a call to Dan Osborn to serve as assistant to the pastor for youth and outreach. Dan, along with his wife, Brandi, served a 10-week pastoral internship at Faith this summer. Dan is a 1999 graduate of Cedarville College.

Dennis Burns is senior pastor at Faith.

Grafton

On October 1, **Midview Baptist** members David and Brenda Mayo and daughter Cortney will move to Hamilton, New York, where David will pastor Cornerstone Baptist Church, a Baptist Church Planters mission church with 40 members. The Mayos recently finished ten years with Baptist Mid Missions in Fortalezo, Brazil as dorm parents and assisting with two mission churches. Since returning from Brazil, the Mayos have been active at Midview, where David's twin brother, Tim, is pastor.

Marysville

On September 12, **Emmanuel Baptist** graduated to self-support. Six years ago the church was a new plant by Baptist Mid-Missions missionaries Jim and Carol Ruck. Steve Butler of Baptist Mid-Missions spoke in the graduation service in the morning with Jim Ruck charging the church. A certificate of graduation was presented to the church. After a fellowship dinner, the installation service for Pastor David Elmore was held, with Steve Butler, Pastor Marvin Clark and Pastor Elmore speaking. Jim and Carol will be in the area and available for whatever God has for them in the future.

Toledo

Emmanuel Baptist recently welcomed Rev. Tom Benefiel as Assistant to the Pastor-Business, Missions Coordinator. Pastor Benefiel joined the staff officially on July 1. Tom and his wife, Karin, served as CBF Pastor to the University of Toledo for 9 years under Baptist Mid-Missions and prior to that two terms in Brazil as church planter. The Benefiels have two children, Kari and Kris.

Bruce Sparks is senior pastor at Emmanuel.

Norwalk

Calvary Baptist recently honored Pastor Jim and Janice McClain on the 20th anniversary of their ministry. A graduate of Baptist Bible College and Seminary, McClain began his pastorate in Norwalk in February, 1979. Calvary is a growing church, and will begin double services this fall. Recently members voted to purchase land adjacent to the church for expansion. Assisting Pastor McClain are Bob Cowman, outreach pastor, Joe Grof, youth pastor, and Romyne Strickland, senior adult pastor.

(continued page 8)

Baptist Children's Home & Family Ministries

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Was Jesus Mistaken?

by Pastor Daniel Simmons

If He wasn't mistaken, why do we operate like He was?

The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few (Matthew 9:36-38). Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest (John 4:35).

Four simple conclusions can be drawn from the assertions of Jesus:

1. Laborers, not receptive people, are lacking.
2. Receptive individuals are numerous.
3. "Harvest time is not now," is an excuse.
4. The cure for rationalization and inaction is to look for receptive people (He promises they exist).

Since Jesus was not mistaken, I would first like to propose a strategy to bring our "operations" into alignment with His point-of-view. This strategy involves:

- discipling lay people with a range of opportunities.
- identifying receptive people.
- engaging lost people at their various levels of receptivity.

To oblige the desire of Jesus for laborers in the harvest, we need to motivate people with something other than guilt. Guilt is a result of being effectively challenged without being adequately equipped. Jesus' solution to this common church problem was discipleship. Discipleship involves orientation, incremental involvement and skill development/instruction (the reverse of modern education). You involve the maximum number of disciples by starting them within their comfort zone (i.e. just observing), then move them forward gradually. This approach requires a range of opportunities for believers from high participation/low skills (i.e. acts of kindness; cf. GARBC Impact 2000 or Conspiracy of Kindness.) through medium participation/medium initiative (i.e. simple invitations to special days), to low participation/high skills-motivation (i.e. sharing testimonies, Evangelism Explosion).

Creating an atmosphere that fosters this kind of discipleship is essential. Begin by strategically scheduling outreach opportunities. The optimum promotional cycle is four to six weeks. Eight to twelve outreach events per year means the congregation is continuously challenged to consider involvement. Even small churches can

do this by putting an outreach "spin" on special days. The most powerful tool to give your people for these days are invitations. In addition, provide "business card" invitations for wallets/purses to create an army carrying the tools to invite anytime, anywhere.

Secondly, a few key concepts can be stated about identifying receptive people. This is a product of "pre-evangelism" — the process of making contacts and developing prospects. The idea is rooted in Jesus' teaching. If there are always receptive people (definitely not all people!) and, let's say, 2 in 10 people are receptive (an arbitrary figure, but not unusual), then if all we do is focused-evangelism on 2 or 3 people, we are setting ourselves up for infrequent results and discouragement (matching many individual's experience). Focused-evangelism is important but should be aimed at receptive people. The only way to identify many receptive people ("behold... lift up your eyes... look... the fields are white already to harvest") is to regularly include outreaches that touch many people.

The third part of this strategy is to engage lost people at their various levels of receptivity. This means using a variety of means to encounter the unchurched at their current stage of "ripeness". The insinuation is that some of our activities must have a longer time frame in view and that continuing activities will build on earlier less threatening/gentler actions.

Finally, let me challenge you that outreach, like farming, does not lend itself to "cramming" (sudden, irregular, last-minute, intense efforts). It is part of a strategic process. Have a plan. Seek receptive individuals. Use a spectrum of appropriate tools/activities.

Because Jesus was right!

Across the State, *continued*



Lima

Meadowbrook Baptist welcomed Andy Manwiller as youth pastor on June 6. Andy is a 1999 graduate of Cedarville College and has been working with the teens for the

past year.

James Jamison is senior pastor at Meadowbrook.

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